

grant of taxes, in the manner customary, whereupon the Commons retired as usual to the Chapter House of the Abbey to consider the demand. They were determined to withhold supplies until they had called the Privy Council to account, but they knew that in order to do this they must associate strong protectors with their action. Making use of a precedent set in the last Parliament, they asked that certain lords should sit in the Chapter House with them, and take part in their consultations. The request was granted, and they proceeded to choose for themselves four Bishops, four Lords, and four Earls. Among the Bishops whom they chose were Courtenay of London and Spencer of Norwich, fearless and violent, alike as champions of the Church and as enemies of the Duke; Spencer had lately been robbed of an advowson by the King's favourites.<sup>1</sup> The chief among the four lords whom they chose was Lord Henry Percy, the hereditary viceroy of the wild borderlands of the kingdom, destined to be known to posterity as the hero of Chevy Chase, the Earl of Northumberland in Shakespeare's 'Henry IV.,' and the father of Harry Hotspur. In reality, he much more closely resembled the calculating politician of the play, who takes care to be absent from Shrewsbury Field, than the romantic hero of the ballad in the famous Cheviot fight, at which, indeed, as a matter of historical fact, he was not present.<sup>2</sup> Like the Earls of Argyle in the seventeenth century, he lived a double life, one of warfare among his wild retainers and enemies at home, another of party intrigue at the capital, where his feudal power in the North helped to win him a high place in the councils of the State. Throughout his life the part he played at Westminster was that of a proud but calculating and ambitious man, determined to make his power felt and to have his family recognised as one of the greatest in England. In the spring of 1376 it was his cue to bring John of Gaunt to terms by showing how formidable an antagonist he could be.

<sup>1</sup> *Rot. Part.*, ii. 830, sec. 48.

\* He is the \* Earl Percy of the \* more modern ballad of Chevy Chase, in Percy's *Reliques*. The ancient ballad of \* Chevy Chase speaks of \* Lord Percy, which might mean either Hotspur or his father. The ballad of the \* Battle of Otterburne \* agrees with Froissart and the truth, that it was Hotspur and not his father, the Earl, who fought the Scotch at Otterburne\*.